

**Connecticut Department of Transportation
Project 134-TMP2
Rotary Upgrade to a Modern Roundabout
Intersection of Routes 32 and 190
Town of Stafford**

**Public Informational Meeting
REPORT OF MEETING**

Date of Meeting: April 11, 2016

Time: 6:30 p.m.

Location of Meeting: Stafford Senior Center
3 Buckley Highway (Route 190)
Stafford Springs, Connecticut

The meeting was convened at 6:30 p.m. with approximately 20 attendees present. The Honorable Anthony Frassinelli, First Selectman of the Town of Stafford, introduced the project and noted that the Department of Transportation (Department) had previously presented this concept to him and other Town officials. He indicated support for the proposal and stated that this meeting was being held to explain the concept and solicit feedback from the public. First Selectman Frassinelli introduced Mr. Matthew Vail, who continued the meeting.

Presentation:

- ⇒ Mr. Vail introduced himself and other members of the Department's Highway Design Unit. He noted that the meeting was being held to solicit comments from the public regarding the proposed concept. He reiterated that he was presenting a concept, not a design project, and as such the information and details should be considered an "engineered sketch" rather than a formalized design.
- ⇒ The purpose of the concept is to improve traffic operations and reduce confusion by upgrading the existing 3-legged rotary to a modern roundabout.
- ⇒ After discussing the location and existing features of the subject intersection, Mr. Vail explained that the proposed concept was initiated when Town Officials notified the Department that large trucks had repeatedly struck the corner of the Police Station and adjacent utility pole in the southwest corner of the intersection.
- ⇒ A review of the subject intersection revealed that the existing geometry and poor signage contribute to high speeds and driver confusion through the intersection. It was noted that although this would not be a safety improvement project, there are numerous near-miss crashes that occur daily and that this concept will address the factors that contribute to those near-crashes.
- ⇒ Mr. Vail presented information about the design attributes of a modern roundabout and provided examples of how the existing conditions of the rotary differ from those attributes. He explained that the proposed concept will reduce speeds, reduce confusion, improve safety, and properly channelize the many large trucks that use the intersection.
- ⇒ Mr. Vail provided information about design considerations unique to this intersection. Specifically, he discussed the need to maintain a parking area for police vehicles directly in front of the Police station and the impacts to the Town Hall parking adjacent

to the intersection (close one of two driveways, reconfigure internal circulation, and the loss of one parking space). Additionally, he noted that there is an opportunity to add landscaped areas or increase the sidewalk width in certain locations because the modern roundabout is slightly smaller than the intersection's existing footprint.

- ⇒ The concept does not anticipate any right-of-way impacts as the modern roundabout can be constructed within the existing footprint of the intersection.
- ⇒ The concept will add protection to the existing fountain in the center of the rotary by encompassing it within the large central island and truck apron.
- ⇒ The estimated construction cost of this concept is approximately \$1 million, which will be eighty percent (80%) Federally funded and twenty percent (20%) State funded.
- ⇒ Construction is anticipated to begin in spring 2019 and last one season. No detour is anticipated as traffic would be maintained on the existing roads during construction.

Public Comments and Questions:

- ⇒ A resident asked whether the truck apron would be constructed of concrete pavers or poured concrete, noting that pavers are likely to heave with cold weather and become a maintenance and aesthetic problem. The Department explained that truck aprons are constructed of poured concrete, but that they are intentionally designed not to look like sidewalks to discourage pedestrians from trying to cross into the roundabout.
- ⇒ A resident asked about the length of the proposed splitter islands. The Department explained that their limits are relatively confined given the existing geometry of the area and do not extend as far as the islands shown as examples during the presentation.
- ⇒ A resident asked if left-turns will be prohibited from Route 32 southbound into the Town Hall parking lot. The Department responded that no, left-turns will not be prohibited into the parking lot. It was noted that the increased deflection created by the roundabout actually increases visibility to the location where a car would stop to take that turn, reducing the likelihood of a crash.
- ⇒ A resident commented that the shortened crosswalks will be a benefit to pedestrians, but strongly encouraged the installation of illumination throughout the intersection to provide additional safety.
 - Numerous other residents agreed with the need for illumination for the intersection and its surrounding areas.
 - State Representative Kurt Vail (a Stafford resident) asked whether additional lighting posts could be provided within the proposed splitter islands. The Department explained that illumination is typically provided from surrounding poles outside of the intersection because splitter islands are often able to be mounted and crossed by large trucks. The inclusion of poles within the islands could inhibit the movement of large trucks, particularly permitted loads.
- ⇒ A resident asked whether the roundabout will remove existing parking spaces in front of the Town Hall and church. The Department responded that yes, there will be a loss of parking areas or drop-off areas in those locations. Additionally, it was noted that there will not be a loss of any parking spaces in front of the bank.
- ⇒ First Selectman Frassinelli asked if there will be any loss of parking on Main Street. The Department responded that no, there will be no loss of parking on Main Street.

- ⇒ A resident asked if the project will improve drainage in the area, noting that there is an existing drainage problem in front of the Police Station. Another resident asked if any drainage improvements will be made to improve the water quality of the runoff, such as collecting sediment. The Department responded that obtaining survey for the area will help to determine the cause of the existing drainage problems and that as part of the design process, it will investigate whether additional measures, such as extra deep sumps for catch basins, should be incorporated into the drainage design to improve the water quality.
- ⇒ A resident noted that the existing sidewalks are immediately adjacent to the proposed roundabout and asked if any additional features will be added for the protection of pedestrians. The Department stated that many roundabouts are able to provide a grass buffer between the outside of the roundabout and the sidewalk, but noted that due to the confines of the surrounding buildings, there is no opportunity for such separation at this location. No features to protect pedestrians will be added, but the Department noted that as the roundabout will fit within the existing footprint of the intersection, the installation of the roundabout does not change the proximity of pedestrians to vehicles at the narrowest point as it exists today and increases this distance at the entrance and exit from the roundabout. Additionally, there will be a two-foot shoulder painted within the roundabout to indicate the separation of the travel lane from the curb.
- ⇒ A resident asked whether there are any other roundabouts in Connecticut that are located this close to a Municipal building. The Department responded that no other roundabout is located this close to a Municipal building, but that others are located within the same proximity to businesses.
- ⇒ A resident asked if the proposed lane widths entering the roundabout are wide enough to allow two vehicles to enter at the same time. The Department responded that no, there is not enough width for two adjacent vehicles. The curbing and splitter islands are designed to channelize vehicles into a single-file for entrance into the roundabout.
- ⇒ A resident asked whether the construction of the roundabout would be coordinated with other work that may be planned for Routes 32 or 190. The Department explained that while the project would likely not be specifically coordinated to coincide with other work in the area, if another project were in conflict, the limits of each project would be discussed to avoid any duplication of work.
- ⇒ A resident asked about the proposed parking area for Police in front of the Station and noted that a large snow storm or large snow banks may prohibit access. The Department responded that while the Department plows the roadway areas, presently, the Town removes snow from the parking areas along Main Street. It is anticipated that a similar arrangement would be needed for the police parking area.
- ⇒ Numerous residents noted the narrowness of Main Street and some of the challenges associated with the narrow lanes and parked vehicles. One resident suggested that, given the difficulty of the maneuver, left-turns be restricted out of Spring Street and vehicles be forced to use the roundabout and make a U-turn to travel westerly.
- ⇒ The Department noted that one benefit of roundabouts is that they are designed to allow trucks (and all vehicles) to make a U-turns or other difficult turning maneuvers. For that reason, a resident suggested that the roundabout be used by large trucks travelling westerly on Route 190 instead of trying to turn right onto Furnace Avenue, noting that a utility pole was recently struck by a truck trying to make that maneuver.

- ⇒ A resident asked whether tandem trailer trucks are allowed in Town. Lieutenant Thomas Duncan responded that tandem trucks are only allowed to leave the highway to reach a destination, not just trying to avoid traffic on the highway. The Department noted that because tandem trailers are typically comprised of two slightly smaller trailers, as opposed to the single large trailer used to design the roundabout, they are actually able to negotiate a roundabout better than the single large truck.
- ⇒ A resident asked whether directional signs, beside yield signs at the entry to the roundabout, would be included in the project. The Department responded that yes, additional signing would be included with the installation of a roundabout.
- ⇒ Numerous residents asked whether rumble strips or other traffic calming measures could be installed on the approaches to the roundabout to help reduce vehicle speeds in the area. The Department responded that traditionally, rumble strips are not installed in such close proximity to business districts and residential areas because they can create a significant amount of noise, but that the Department would investigate these and other traffic calming measures on the approaches to the roundabout.

Adjournment:

In general, the project was well received by the residents. The vast majority of the concerns were addressed during the formal presentation or during the question and answer session. The meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:00 p.m.